

August 21, 1957

Dear Miss Hawkins,

This is in confirmation of our conversations on the evening of August 15. I am now in a position to make you a definite offer.

The job in question is that of Pedigree-tracer ("pedigree supervisor" might be an appropriate designation eventually) in the Division of Medical Genetics of the Department of Medicine, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. There will be a faculty appointment of assistant in medicine associated with the job in the beginning. (This is, of course, subject to the approval of Dr. A.M. Harvey and the Advisory Board of the Medical School, but no difficulty is anticipated.) The beginning salary will be \$4800. per annum. The position will provide you with the usual fringe benefits of a faculty appointment in a private university; such as one month's vacation.

You have expressed an interest in giving the job a one-year's trial; I would like to take you on with a similar agreement, namely, that if the arrangement is not mutually satisfactory it can terminate at the end of the year on the request of either party.

If the arrangement is satisfactory, you can plan to get further study, beginning the second year, and work part-time in the same capacity in the Division of Medical Genetics. Candidature for M.S. from the Department of Biology using a human genetics problem for your thesis would be practicable, I believe.

I am in charge of the teaching of Preventive Medicine in the Medical School. More accurately stated, Preventive Medicine is to be taught in the future by a cooperative effort between the Departments of Medicine and Pediatrics. I am in charge of the Department of Medicine's contribution to this joint effort; Dr. Barton Childs, who as you probably know is much interested in Medical Genetics, is the Pediatrics representative. This responsibility has only recently been thrust upon us and it is undecided what the precise nature of the instruction will be during the coming year. We have available to us Thursday and Saturday mornings 9 - 12. I have proposed use of Thursday morning for a Family Clinic in the Medicine I area. This has not been received enthusiastically in all quarters, so that what if anything will be done this first year is undecided.

I plan to see that you have at least a small office in the present Medicine I area. Clerical assistance will be available to you for correspondence and for typing of the pedigree information you collect.

The primary job will consist of collecting extensive information on members of families of persons with various hereditary diseases. No particular ethno-socio-economic stratum will be picked out for particular study; however, because of the economic effects of chronic illness due to hereditary disease there will be a moderate preponderance of poorer classes. The job will necessitate the use of a car, which you can provide, I understand, and for which you will be reimbursed on a mileage basis. The families studied may be residing anywhere in the state; however, the majority will be in the metropolitan area of the city.

I want to point out that the main function of this position is research; teaching is a secondary function for this first year. I envisage that in the future the two functions will be equal since at that time you will be in charge of pedigree-tracing, will be responsible for the tracing done by the various students and trainees in the Division, and will teach them the techniques you will have learned. It is my intention that at least eventually your status would be that of collaborator on research problems. We would hope that you would derive pleasure from seeing worth while research in medical genetics turned out, as well as from learning more about an intellectually stimulating field which is rapidly blossoming forth at the moment.

In addition to basic information on all close relatives (birthdate, date of death, residence, medical information, etc.), you will be expected to search out and abstract pertinent hospital and physicians' records, obtain death certificates, etc. It will, of course, be necessary to brief you on the particular type of medical information desired in each case. The best approach for obtaining the rapport and cooperation of the family will need to be carefully considered in each instance.

Dr. Raymond Pearl collected extensive family data 30-40 years ago. These data, which have laid fallow all these years, I hope to get hold of and as the opportunity permits bring up to date with useful results.

In some instances collection of urine or blood samples from members of families will be part of the job. Eventually it would be my plan to make the pedigree-tracing facilities of this Division available to members of the Department of Medicine with pedigrees to be traced. However, the understanding would be that I would have to give the OK to taking on of such work.

Sincerely,

Victor A. McKusick, M.D.  
Associate Professor of Medicine  
Chief, Division of Medical Genetics

VAM/gr

P.S.: Enclosed are: 1) some genetics reprints. Perhaps you can get hold of my monograph entitled Heritable Disorders of Connective Tissue.

2) a list of some pedigrees which I am anxious to get traced in the near future.